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ABSTRACT

EChO (Early Childhood Organisation Inc.) is a group of Australian professional educators whose focus is the education and care of children ages 3 to 8 years. This paper outlines a project effort made by EChO entitled "Enhancing Professionalism for Early Childhood Educators in South Australia by Improving Classroom Practice and Researching Appropriate Practice for the 21st Century." The description first contains a grant proposal including expected outcomes, a commitment to meeting professional objectives, and the role of partners--promoting partnership between educator authorities, teacher organizations and universities. The proposal also includes: (1) rationale and objectives of EChO; (2) methodology of EChO's professional development program;(3) target audience of the conference--early childhood educators from government and non government schools; and (4) professional development program. All seminars, clusters and conferences are designed to incorporate the principles of adult learning. Following this section is a study of EChO's involvement in the National Professional Development Project, including a history of former research methods, and following with current research, evaluation surveys, and outcomes, which focus on the long-term implications for improved student learning outcomes, as well as characteristics of the teaching workforce. The research and evaluation has shown several key indicators that can be named as "value added" components to teacher effectiveness, and therefore also may be named long-term implications for improved student learning outcomes. These are increased motivation, increased commitment, increased opportunity, valuing current practice, and increased Autonomy. A participant survey is included. (WJC)

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Position: EChO/NPDP Co-ordinator (DECS)

Category : Paper presentation 30 minutes
Discussion 15 minutes

Group size: 25 - 40

Title: **SUPPORTING THE INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.**

Biographical Notes:
- Hold a Dip. T. and B.Ed. from Uni of SA
- Currently completing a M. Ed. through Deakin University
- DECS classroom teacher - 16 years
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- Key Curriculum Manager - Inclusive Curriculum 1990 •

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APPLICATION FOR A GRANT UNDER THE NATONAL PROFESSIOANL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM - 1996

GENERAL ELEMENT

MAIN APPLICANT

Name Liz Sandercock

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APPLICANT PARTNERS
Name SA Consortium

GRANTEE
Full Name of incorporated body
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Fairview Park PS
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Fairview Park SA 5126.

Name and title of signatory
Janet Ashton, Secretary

TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Enhancing professionalism for early childhood educators in South Australia by improving classroom practice and researching appropriate practice for the 21st Century.

SHORT DESCRIPTION

Enhancing professionalism for early childhood educators in South Australia by improving classroom practice and researching appropriate practice for the 21st Century.

ECHO a group of professional educators whose focus if the education and care of children aged from 3 to 8 years, is committed to ptormoting and developing tfurther the status, high quality and future direction of early childhood.

The professional development program for 1996, will continue to facilitate the development of classroom practice and will focus on implementing Statements and Profiles engaging in researching appropriate practice for the 21st Century.

The program will be facilitated through the Organisation developing a number of networks in a range of country and city locations.

The Course will consist of Saturday seminars and collegial clusters held twice a term. Attendance and presentation at the EChO Bi-enniel Conference, which includes all early childhood educators, will be a part of the course work for graduate participants.

TOTAL GRANT SOUGHT $ 66, 000

FULL DESCRIPION OF THE PROPOSAL

1. DESCRIPTION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Rationale and objectives

EChO is a group of professional educators whose focus is the education and care of children aged three to eight years. EChO is committed to promoting and developing further the status, high quality and future direction of early childhood.

The program aims to:

develop inquiry and research into appropriate practice for the 21st Century using the Statements and Profiles.

work with Early Childhood University personnel to facilitate collaborative partnerships in learning

establish networks of early childhood educators. Participants in the program will provide leadership succession for the continuation of the networks

establish collegial groups within networks, to have dialogue, extend thinking and support in appropriate practice for the 21st Century.

link with other professional associations when the curriculum focus in the key learning areas is required by participants eg. The Arts, Technology, Health and Physical Education.

document and publish research projects.

Methodology

The professional development program will consist of attendance at one full day conference, four Saturday Seminars, collegial network meetings, and the Bi-ennial Conference. The focus of these activities is described above.

One Day State Conference

To introduce participants to the requirements of the program.

To introduce participants to the context theories and debate around appropriate practice for 21st century.

To develop a plan of action with each graduate participant to follow .

Saturday Seminars

Topics for discussion will be introduced at each session.

Explicit teaching - continuing application from Cornerstones

Critical inquiry - thinking skills
The global education context
The Equity context and inclusive curriculum
Focus curriculum projects - SHIP, The Arts, Technology, Health and Physical Education.

Expected Outcomes

Provision of current information, debate of renewal of teachers knowledge and teaching skills about approrpiate practice for the 21st Century in relation to Statements and Profiles through :

The State Conference
Dissemination of classroom research findings through proesentations to cluster groups and earlu childhood educators by graduate certificate students at the Bi-enniel Conference
a publicationmade available to early chldhood educators

Provision of two units of work towards a graduate certificate in education (Professional Practice)

2. NPDP OBJECTIVES

The proposed EChO professional development program and the outcomes will also meet NPDP objectives. In particular the EChO program will:

facilitate the use of key learning areas in Statements and Profiles
research appropriate practice for yhe 21st Century
assist in the renewal of teachers' discipline, knowledge and teaching skills
enhance the professional culture of early childhood teachers
encourage teachers to take a higher profile in promoting professional development of teachers through the development and continuation of networks.

3. ROLE OF PARTNERS

This professional development program will promote partnership between educators authorities, teacher oraganisations and auniversities, through membership in the SA Consortium. The role of the partners are defined through membership of the SA Consortium.

EChO will

appoint an early childhood co-ordinator
provide a management committe to continually assess and evaluate development and delivery of the professional development program
monitor the developmen of units of work towards the graduate certificate of

professional practice

disseminate information to its members and to all early childhood settings in SA

The following groups will be supporting the EChO proposal

Australian Early Childhood Association (SA Chapter)
Institute of Early Childhood Educators
Curriculum division DECS
Childrens Services Office DECS
The Orphanage Teachers Centre DECS
University of South Australia
deLissa Institute of Early Childhood Studies
Skills Training Centre for Children's Services

4. TARGET AUDIENCE

The target group is early childhood educators from government and non government schools and early childhood centres. There are over three thousand teachers in the schoolong sector and approximtely 750 in Childrens Services in government schools.

It is estimated that 100 conferees will attend the one day state conference,
200 will attend the Bi-enniel Conference
50 will attend Saturday seminars
20 will attend each of the 5 clusters.

We anticipate 20 participants will complete work towards accreditation for the Graduate Certificate in Education (Professional Practice)

Government teachers school sector	Childrens service sector	Non government teachers	
State Conference			
80	10	10	(70%)metro
Total		100	
Bi-enniel Conference			
140	20	40	(75%)metro
Total		200	
Saturday Seminars			
40	5	5	(90%)metro

Total			50	
Clusters	x5			
80		10	10	(60%)metro
Total			100	

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

EChO will continue to provide professional development for early childhood educators in extending the opportunity through networks that offer suport and providde information, run workshops designrd to improvr learning outcomes for students in early childhood programs and offers collegial support for early childhood practiotioners inquiring into appropriate practice for the 21st century.

An EChO Bulletin is distributed once a term to inform early childhood educators of current issues and programs. The EChO Bulletin will include regular inforamtion about NPDP.

In addition the NPDP allows EChO to offer high quality activities to both country and city early childhood educators as well as involvement in the provision of early childhood units toward the graduate certificate (professiona practice) The production of a publication on the topics will be in addition to the regular program offered by EChO.

6. PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS

Participants will contribute to the planning of the professional activity by:

Collaborative planning and implementation of Seminars and Clusters

Collaborative planning and implementation of the Bi-enniel Conference

Presentation of papers and preparation and delivery of research at a Bi-enniel workshop

Documentation for publication of research.

All seminars, clusters and Conferences are designed to incorpoarte the prnciples of adult learning. Each session will include some of the following strategies - inquiry, dialogue, active involvement, needs analysis,issue generation, discussion, debate, reflection, review and evaluation.

SUPPORTING THE INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

AUTHOR

Liz Sandercock
Early Childhood Organisation (EChO) Inc.
South Australia

November 1995.

Paper No. 19.

INTRODUCTION

EChO's involvement in the National Professional Develpment Project began following the introduction of The National Statements and Profiles for Australian Schools, when the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) granted funds to the South Australian Consortium of Professional Associations, for the purpose of providing professional development for its members.

The national professional development project is a federal initiative of the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) . Significant funds were allocated over a three year period to the professional development of teachers in Australia.

In South Australia, teacher professional associations took the major responsibility for the design and delivery of professional development programs that were to focus on:

. Curriculum Statements and Profiles
. Key Competencies
. Innovative approaches to teaching and learning

NPDP also included the offer of a Graduate Certificate that would be funded by DEET and presented at no cost to teachers. In doing so, teachers would have the opportunity to re-new their professional skills through innovative programs that focussed on positive outcomes in terms of teaching and student learning.

One of the great benefits and an incentive to teachers was to gain formal recognition of their work in an award accredited by the University of South Australia. The Graduate Certificate in Education (Professional Practice) enabled teachers to gain up to three quarters of the award through work undertaken within the professional association programs. This was the first time that teachers work has been valued in this way.

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The S.A. consortium was formed to give strength to any bids that were made for funds, as it was perceived that a group of associations and other stakeholders would be more successful in their bid than associations working independently.
The consortium has a management committee of representatives from professional associations, the University of S.A. and the South Australian Institute of Teachers (SAIT). EChO is one of the member associations.

In South Australia teacher professional associations take major responsibility for the design and delivery of the professional development activities, and are partners in the NPDP: S.A. Consortium.

EChO is a group of professional educators committed to promoting and developing further the status, high quality and future direction of early childhood education in South Australia. It aims to:

> promote and maintain the visibility of early childhood education
> further the professional development of early childhood educators
> stimulate continuing interest, advocacy and research into the development of young children's education.

EChO formed a management committee to appoint a co-ordinator responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the professional development program. The program began in 1994, and was designed to :

. develop inquiry and research
. draw on current research and facilitate critical debate
. establish and maintain networks of early childhood educators
. establish collegial groups within networks , to debate, challenge thinking and support curriculum renewal.
. document and publish research projects.

THE PROGRAM

Units offered
During 1994 and 1995 the following units were offered based around action research being undertaken in classrooms.

Introducing Statements and Profiles
Assessing childrens learning using Statements and Profiles
Educational Leadership for the 21st Century
Social Justice implications of Statements and Profiles

The methodology

Participants attended a state conference and subsequent seminar sessions held during the semester. The seminars included focussed discussion on relevant readings supplied on the topic. Educators with expertise in the focus areas gave information about current theory, and recent successful or innovative practice. Collegial groups planned, discussed and evaluated the

action research projects as page 3.

they evolved in classroom settings. Sessions were held in both the city and country, and included teachers from the public as well as the private sector schools.

The research

Classroom research was implemented following the action research cycle published by Carr and Kemmis (1986). The cycle involves gathering data in the initial stages of the project, reflecting on the implications of the collated data, then designing and implementing some improvement process to match the resulting needs. Following the implementation phase the same data is again collected and evaluated to demonstrate the improvement in results.

Evaluation Survey

At the end of each semester, all participants have been involved in an evaluation of the program, and of the work accomplished. The methods by which this has occured have been by evaluation survey of the program, individual reflection through journal writing, and peer evaluation during the sessions.

All of these methods have provided information to inform the participants and the management committee in the form of an Evaluation Report. The success indicated by the Report has been instrumental in the continuing funding of the program.

It is from all this information gathered throughout the program, that the "value added" components have been drawn. Much research currently focusses on the emotional effect that rapid changes in education is having on teachers and the effect on their work in schools. The participants in this program have demonstrated through their "voices" that when the climate, structures and resources provided are right their level of motivation, commitment and energy can remain high.

THE OUTCOMES

The research and evaluation has shown several key indicators that can be named as "value added" components to teacher effectiveness and therefore the long term implications for improved student learning outcomes.

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These key indicators discussed below are:

1. Increased Motivation.
2. Increased Commitment
3. Increased Opportunity
4. Valuing Current Practice
5. Increased Autonomy.

1. INCREASED MOTIVATION

In the current context of educational change, there are several recognised characteristics of the teaching workforce:

- high stress
- low energy
- ageing population
- resistence to change
- low morale

There is much current research (Hargreaves, 1994, Rowe, 1995) that demonstrates the effect of global and rapid change in education. These are evidenced by the rapid introduction of technology, decreasing resources, and nationally imposed curriculum change with an outcomes focussed base, cultural and social diversity requiring a heavily supported needs base for students at risk. It is demonstrated through research, that all these factors, including an ageing work force population, have an effect on teacher morale, energy and stress levels.

Teachers have much to accomodate to, in programs and practice, to feel they are making a difference for students who will leave school and seek employment in the 21st Century.

A recent large scale study published by Ken Rowe in Victoria (1995)
- Victorian Quality Schools Project 1992-1994, (VQSP)
on teacher effectiveness described under "Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions " (p10 & 11)
- that most teacher's have a positive attitude to their work and
- in particular they like working with their collegues.

The predictors of teacher higher morale in this study were:
- access to professional development about practice and methodology,
leadership support,
- peer support,
- constructive feedback, and
- goal congruence in a supportive and professional culture.

These predictors were designed into the EChO program, and the evaluationhas shown similar indicators realised a positive outcome for the program.

The high success rate of the EChO program showed that teacher motivation increased with involvement in collegial peer groups, focussed planning and specific feedback acknowledging the work of teachers.

The evaluative survey at the end of the program asked participants to rate and comment on the factors identified as "value added" components to a professional development program.

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In answer to the factor of motivation, no-one experienced increased stress through participating in the program, and 100% of the responses indicated morale, energy and acceptance of change were high.

2. INCREASED COMMITMENT

The program provided participants with support in a variety of ways:

- time for professional development with collegues
- collegial dialogue
- material resources
- personnel
- funding

Hargreaves study with elementary teachers in Ontario in 1990, when researching the important elements of commitment to continual improvement, found three major aspects.

The first one was time. Teachers were very aware that they only had so much time to manage their class, their planning and improvement programs. When engaged in a professional development program, the provision of time was a determinant to the commitment to follow through and complete what had begun. Teachers set realistic possibilities for innovations according to the balance between class demands and time arrangements. In this study teachers created regular time to work together outside class time but within the school day.

A second aspect was that time to plan with collegues and to work in a small group was valued highly.
The NPDP study showed 80% of the respondents identified personnel and collegial dialogue as a high factor in increasing their commitment to the program.

" Initially the opportunity to access professional development which could be accredited to a qualification and which attracted no HECS fees was very important , but the chances to participate in collegial dialogue soon became the equal if not greater advantage."

A strong feature of the program was the provision of reference material, and articles which supported the presenters and the research being undertaken. This correlates with the third aspect of the above quoted study, where teachers looked for highly valued support material and models of good practice.

" Excellent speakers and their handouts/papers were invaluable resources. Most effective in that current issues were addressed, good practice acknowledged and a wealth of resources with support from guest speakers provided us with opportunity and skills to improve further the learning outcomes for children."

With this resource support for professional development, participants showed high commitment. Research has shown that this is among the greatest factors in developing the committment to a professional development program.

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3. INCREASED OPPORTUNITY

The program provided regular and frequent opportunity for participants to meet together to form collegial groups to:

- share good practice
- discuss ideas
- question
- confront and
- reconstruct developmental programs

Badger and Mc Cormick (1989) suggest that teachers need:

"opportunities to confirm the worth of their current knowledge and practice
opportunities to sustain an assisted reflection on their current practice
opportunities to engage with and validate theories of learning
powerful demonstrations of effective teaching practices.
opportunities to make decisions and to grapple with the consequences"

(p40)

Teachers in classrooms already know much about the way in which children learn. Their experience gathered from teaching many different groups and individuals in a variety of methodologies, continues to re-inforce that the development of contemporary practice takes the best from all the experience. A narrow focus on a "new" practice may well cause teachers to devalue past practice. Ignoring current knowledge and practices may lead to teachers being overwhelmed, confused and not knowing what they should be doing.

John Smyth (1989), developed a model for teacher critical reflective practice. The indicators for the catorgories are described as questions. The questions are posed to encourage the nature of challenge within critical reflective practice.

1. Ground Work - establishing readiness
   Am I prepared for some discomfort?
   Am I prepared to confront my own assumptions and beliefs ?
   Am I ready to describe and reflect on what is happening with my practice?

2. Describing - What are my practices ?
   What is happening?
   How do I know this?
   In what sense is it problematic?

3. Informing - What are the principles of my practice?
   What is my role as a teacher ?
   What do I believe aboout students and their learning ?

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   What do I feel about my practice and responsibility in the whole school setting
   What major contradictions are there ? What would this mean for me and my

school ?

4. Confronting - What are the causes?
What have been the influences in my practice ?
What assumptions have I made about the nature and process of my practice?
Is there a mis-match between what I do and what I believe ?

5. Re-constructing - How might I change ?
How would this better serve the interests of the students or teams with which I work ?
How do I need to change ?
How will I know if I am making a difference ?
With whom can I share my reflections ?

A similar process to this was followed when the collegial groups met as part of the NPDP sessions to discuss, question and redevelop their ideas according to the research being undertaken

The data collected from the participants in the program suggested that 90% of the respondents valued the opportunities to share good practice, and 80% valued the opportunity of collegial dialogue to reconstruct developmental programs.

" In many cases the key speakers left us questioning our teaching practice (ie are we doing all we can for all students?) Our groups gave us a chance to share , listen, ask for assistance/ ideas/support etc and I think the benefits will be felt in the classrooms of each member of our collegial groups. "

4. VALUING CURRENT PRACTICE

Acknowledgement of peers was of high importance in the program. The gain in professional confidence and energy, increased morale and self esteem, was evident from the data collected.

Research in classrooms has been recognised as a valid improvement process particularly when supported in a peer program. Recently, Vockell and others (1983) have described a wider definition of research that validates the process from a classroom base. Although it is recognised, of course, that macro research in areas of broad public policy concerns are necessary in setting directions and goals and in providing theories and frames of reference for subsequent research, its findings often are difficult to translate into classroom behaviours and practices.

Chattin-McNichols and Loeffler (1989) feel that the benefits of having teachers page 8.

conduct their own meaningful research in classrooms far outweigh any concerns for possible problems of small sample sizes or quasi-experimental designs.

Vockell (1983) described three levels that may be called research:

- descriptors of processes - ie, what actually happens.
- descriptors of relationships - ie, what is associated with what.
- research supporting a causative relationship even without relationship to an overall theory.

Classroom teachers are faced on a daily basis with questions that puzzle and concern them in their interactions with children. Many of these questions provide appropriate material for micro-research projects for teachers to carry out in their classrooms. From this EChO developed its program.

The aims of this part of the project were to help teachers develop confidence in a supported program, and learn research skills to use in their own classrooms as a practical and ongoing means of improving their own teaching.

Secondly, to develop a network that will provide the support for each other and who can, through co-operative efforts, focus attention upon particular areas of study that are of common interest and concern.

Action research resolved a past dilemma between formal research and functional practice when teachers carry out research in their own classrooms. It has been found to be successful as a valid strategy for teachers to use in valuing and owning their improvement in practice when the following conditions are met.

1. Self Selection

Teachers choose their own research topic, rather than outside researchers selecting topics. The implication of this is that teachers see themselves as being able to select relevant and appropriate topics for research.

2. Networking

The establishment of a network of teachers involved in a similar project provides support and assistance throughout the process of learning new skills. Teachers reported that they experienced increased energy knowing that they were able to enjoy supportive and critically reflective discussions with peers.

3. Collegial forum

The collegial forum of peers in which trusting relationships have been established, and to which the research results and developments can be presented in an embryonic form, without fear of premature criticism.

For many participants, this was their first experience at using a research process. Their comments from the evaluation confirm the importance of peers working together in a new learning situation, valuing each others knowledge and support.
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Of those surveyed, 95% stated that they gained professional confidence, and 100% found

they gained energy through the support of peers in the program.
As a result it was reported that both morale and self esteem increased.

"My work in this program, cluster meetings, conference days etc. have all renewed my energy , interest and commitment to the students in my class. "

5. INCREASED AUTONOMY

With the formation of the collegial groups in the structure of the program, relationships gained strength and trust was high.
The self managing groups planned, implemented, documented, and evaluated programs.
Teacher initiated action research and collegial relationships demonstrated the empowerment of personal ownership in a professional development program

Within an effective and empowered learning organisation are the people, all of whom are considered leaders in their respective roles.

" I Teach", written by Joan Dalton and Julie Boyd, is a book dedicated

"to teachers who have a vision and the courage to be part of the increasingly complex and demanding profession where change is a constant in their day to day teaching lives" (p2)

The way teachers do this is by building life long attitudes to learning and by empowering others to become what they can be - self- aware reflective thinkers who know how to learn and have a strong sense of self worth and inner direction, who take responsibility for themselves and who have a sense of responsibility toward others.

Says Julie Boyd,

" It seems to us that great teachers either know consciously or intuitively that true learning occurs when people take control. This means that.... they carry with them a set of principles that .....instead of being overwhelmed by the knowledge explosion, they are choosing to move to an economy of learning."

These principles relate to building relationships with others, creating a community of learners, empowering growth in others, and working on self growth.

Teachers are key people in the improvement of learning methodology and learning outcomes for their students. Their production of knowledge is closely connected to teaching practice and in many cases goes no further than their own classrooms.

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One of the key aspects of the EChO/ NPDP program was that it created forums where knowledge could circulate, be discussed, debated and documented to benefit teachers and

thereby their students learning outcomes.

This valued exchange can be named a learning conversation . This concept is explored in Augustein's book called Learning Conversations (1991). Some of the indicators that mark learning conversation teams as they think insightfully about complex issues are as follows:

. They relate theory to practice
. The members take responsibility for their own learning, becoming self organised learners
. They develop skills of critical collaboration including developing a critical partnership utilising peer appraisal.
. They have constant membership
. The group operates in a circular fashion, with seating and questioning, to ensure inclusion and equity of air space.
. The teams have a facilitator or coach, a recorder and a timekeeper. There may be other roles as defined by the group.
. The team maintains a journal of group and individual learnin
. The group may focus on contesting educational ideas, de-constructing and re-constructing, articulating beliefs and questioning why, focus on outcomes using research and analysis.

All participants (100%) reported through the evaluative survey that the collegial groups highly recognised that benefit of co-operation, open comunication and support.
Of the respondents who replied 90% reported benefit in the groups being self-managing, and 60% reported benefit in the groups being critical and reflective.
Some of their comments included,

" This is the most rewarding, supportive way of working."

" One of our group member's was very reflective on our behalf and her operating style rubbed off on us all after a while - comments beginning with "Do you think what we are really saying is ....." are great for bringing a discussion together and then getting it moving on."

CONCLUSION

The "value added" outcomes on which this paper is based, present an additional achievement for the project, and are a tribute to the professional dedication to improve learning outcomes that Early Childhood educators desire for the students in their care.

Of the value added dimensions Sergiovanni uses in his book "Value- Added Leadership - How to get extraordinary performance in schools, " (1990), he
page 11.

explains that enhancing collegiality and intrinsic motivation are both powerful and practical improvement strategies. They are the value added dimensions that are necessary to build a

professional culture of teachers with standards , norms, and practices aligned to excellence.

Sergiovanni states, when the climate is supportive with leaders and teachers supporting each other, co-operative relationships and high social interaction results. Within this climate, collegial values and shared decision making are present which result in high personal causation and a high responsibility for work outcomes.
When the culture provides a sense of purpose, shared mission and a basis for accountability, high expectations, and self-esteem result from work that is meaning ful and significant . All these factors combine to produce a sense of efficacy, motivation and commitment in teachers. This ultimately results in improved learning outcomes for children.

Planning given to the following:

collegial climate, that enhances morale. energy and acceptance of change.

supportive structure that empowers through intinsic motivation, collegiality and autonomy,

and resources, which enabled regular opportunity for participants to value each other knowledge, gain new knowledge from informed leaders and respond to current theories,

have shown that value added dimensions will lead to teachers functioning more effectively and in the longer term improve student learning outcomes.

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THE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE - for those who choose to do this.

To acknowledge the work that teachers do in their classrooms
To acknowledge the work that professional associations do in assisting in the professional development of teachers.
The award is being designed by the consortium and the University in collaboration.
The award is an 18 point award, 4 units by 4.5 points each
It will be called the Graduate Certificate in Education (Professional Practice)
There is an expectation of quality outcomes for all those involved
It is a non fee paying certificate - it is paid for through DEET

ACCREDITATION - An EChO Certificate of Profesional Practice

This is for the participants who complete the course of workshops, but do not want to continue with extra units for the graduate Certificate.

ECHO's AIM

EChO's aim is to improve learning outcomes for children in early childhood programs through renewed knowledge and teaching skills with a focus on National Statements and Profiles for Australian schools.

How ?

By involving teachers in a critical and reflective process, inquiring into early childhood methodology, social justice issues that affect participation of students in learning programs investigating appropriate assessment and recording practices, and planning an holistic approach to achieving learning outcomes for children.

This will be implemented through

an action research program which each participant will carry out and report on in a collegial group.

readings which will be reviewed and discussed at each session

input sessions that will provide current thinking and background to the focus areas of the program, with follow up tasks.

an evaluation of the course

The specific outcomes of the program will be that each participant

will have kept a reflective journal that records their journey through the program

will keep a summary of readings reviewed in each session will have documented their program for publication

will have participated in each session with their peers

will understand and use S & P appropriately in the early years of education

The broader outcomes of this program will be to

promote and maintain advocacy for early childhood education

contribute to research into the development of young children and

further the development of early childhood education in S.A.

Learning Conversation Team Members

. They relate theory to practice

. The members take responsibility for their own learning, becoming self organised learners.

. They develop skills of critical collaboration including developing a critical partnership utilising peer appraisal.

. They have constant membership

. The group operates in a circular fashion, with seating and questioning, to ensure inclusion and equity of air space.

. The teams have a facilitator or coach, a recorder and a timekeeper. There may be other roles as defined by the group.

. The team maintains a journal of group and individual learning

. The group may focus on contesting educational ideas, de-constructing and re-constructing, articulating beliefs and questioning why, focus on outcomes using research and and analysis.

SURVEY for participants from the EChO NPDP 1994/5

I am asking you to respond in brief to this survey. The information will become part of the 1995 evaluation and will also be used in a paper I am presenting in Hobart at the Early Childhood Conference in January 1996.

The purpose is to assess what aspects of the program benefitted your increased effectiveness and supported you as a participant in a professional development program.

1. Motivation

Involvement in collegial peer groups ,focussed planning and specific feedback acknowledging the work of teachers increases motivation.
To what degree was your motivation affected by the following factors?

. stress

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. morale

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. energy

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. acceptance of change

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

Comment

2. Commitment

With resource support for professional development there is increased commitment.
To what degree did these resources ensure your commitment to the program.

. time
high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. personnel\
high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. collegial dialogue
high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. material resources
high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. no cost
high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

Comment

3. Opportunity

The program provided regular and frequent opportunity for participants to meet together to form collegial groups, support and challenge each other, listen to stimulating key speakers and share action research ideas.
To what degree did your collegial group share good practice?

. share good practice
high----------low

1 2 3 4 5

. question

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. confront

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. re-construct developmental programs

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

Comment

4. Valuing Curent Practice

Acknowledgement from peers is seen to be of importance in valuing each others practice.

To what degree have you

. gained professional confidence

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. found energy for your project

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

To what degree has your morale increased ?

high----------low

self esteem increased

high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

Comment

5. Increased autonomy

Collegial groups are said to strengthen professional relationships and trust. To what degree was your collegial group....

. self managing high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. co-operative high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. open high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. supportive high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. critical high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

. reflective high----------low
1 2 3 4 5

Comment

Thank you for the time you have taken to fill this out.
Please return to Liz Sandercock by 8.11.95 or a.s.a.p.

Title: Supporting the increased effectiveness of teacher's in a professional development program and the implications for student learning outcomes.

Content summary

- A brief history of EChO's involvement in the National Professional Development Project
- The formation of the S.A. consortium
- The appointment of a co-ordinator for the program
- The EChO teacher professional development program - based on implementing statements and profiles
- The research (data collection) and evaluation has shown several key indicators that can be named as "value added " components to teacher effectiveness and the long term implications for improved student learning outcomes.

They are:

1. Increased motivation

In the current context there are several recognised characteristics of the teaching workforce:

- high stress
- aging population
- low morale
- low energy
- resistance to change

The high success rate of the EChO/NPDP program showed that teacher motivation increased with involvement in collegial peer groups, focussed planning and specific feedback acknowledging the work of teachers.

2. Increased commitment

The program provided participants with support in a variety of ways.

- time
- personnel
- collegial dialogue
- resources
- funding

With this resource support for professional development participants displayed high commitment.

3. Increased opportunity

The program provided the regular and frequent opportunity for participants to meet together, to form collegial groups, to:

- share good practice
- question
- re-construct developmental programs.
- discuss ideas
- confront and

The program provided a supportive and challenging facilitator, stimulating key speakers and active research ideas.

4. Valuing current practice

Acknowledgment from peers was of high importance in this program. The growth in confidence, self esteem, increased energy and morale was very evident from data collected. Action research in classrooms was recognised as a valid improvement process.

5. Increased autonomy

With the formation of the collegial groups in the structure of the program, relationships gained strength and trust was high. The self managing groups planned, implemented, documented and evaluated programs. Teacher initiated action research and collegial relationships demonstrated the empowerment of personal ownership in a professional development program.

Objective

The purpose of the presentation is to share, in summary, the good practice of teachers involved in the program.

The presentation will also provide a report of information gained from evaluative feedback from teachers with regard to their feelings of increased efficacy in the program and commitment to increasing student learning outcomes.

Presentation

The methodology of presentation will be a 30 minute lecture presentation supported with an overhead projector, followed by 15 minutes of discussion and question time.

Importance

The importance of presenting this information is:

- to acknowledge the critical element of teacher initiated professional development programs to increase teacher effectiveness
- to demonstrate the importance of resource provision being provided to support curriculum renewal
- to acknowledge the commitment of early childhood educators to improve their practice in the best interests of students
- to value what teacher's are implementing in class as valid current research to improve student learning outcomes
- to demonstrate the empowering process of collegial dialogue and teacher initiated research.

Theme

Appropriate teaching and learning and curriculum practice in the early years.